United Nations A/C.4/63/SR.1

General Assembly
Sixty-third session

Official Records

Distr.: General
10 October 2008

Original: English

Special Political and Decolonization Committee
Fourth Committee

Summary record of the 1st meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 2 October 2008, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Argüello ..... (Argentina)

Contents

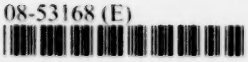
Organization of work

Requests for hearing

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

08-53168 (E)



The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Organization of work (A/C.4/63/1; A/C.4/63/L.1; A/C.4/63/INF/1)

1. **The Chairman** drew attention to document A/C.4/63/1, which contained the agenda items allocated to the Committee, and to document A/C.4/63/L.1, which contained the Committee's programme of work with a proposed timetable.

2. He then drew attention to the relevant rules and recommendations of the General Assembly contained in the report of the General Committee (A/63/250) regarding the work of the Main Committees, including those contained in General Assembly decision 34/401 and resolutions 58/126 and 58/316.

3. In order to make full use of the time and conference services that had been made available to the Committee, he intended to convene and adjourn the meetings promptly; he would convene a meeting only when there were sufficient speakers on the list. All speakers, in particular the first three speakers for a given meeting, should be present in the Committee room on time.

4. The Assembly had decided to continue its practice of departing from the rule that one quarter of the members must be present for a Main Committee meeting to be declared open. With respect to explanations of vote, rights of reply and points of order, the Committee would conduct its work strictly in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, contained in document A/520/Rev.16, annex V. In line with the time limits for explanations of vote and rights of reply, statements on points of order should be limited to five minutes. He suggested that statements during the general debate should not exceed 10 minutes, or 15 minutes in the case of members speaking on behalf of several delegations.

5. In respect of resolutions, he drew attention, inter alia, to paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution 48/264, which encouraged Member States to exercise restraint in making proposals requesting new reports of the Secretary-General, and to paragraph 69 of resolution 57/270 B, which requested that resolutions should be short and focus more on action-oriented operative paragraphs.

6. With regard to programme budget implications and rule 153 of the rules of procedure, he noted that the General Assembly had drawn the Committee's attention to paragraph 12 of its decision 34/401, which stated that it was imperative for the Main Committees to allow sufficient time for the preparation of the estimate of expenditures by the Secretariat and for its consideration by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee. That could take a few days, depending on the type and complexity of a proposal. Draft resolutions, draft decisions and amendments, together with the names of the sponsors thereof, should be submitted, in writing, to the Secretariat, in both electronic and paper copies. The Secretariat required at least 48 hours to process a draft resolution.

7. He pointed out that agenda item 31, entitled "Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects", would also be taken up in a plenary meeting of the General Assembly in order to mark the 60th anniversary of the start of peacekeeping operations. The commemorative meeting to mark that event would be held on 11 November 2008.

8. Agenda item 119, entitled "Programme planning", had been allocated to all the Main Committees and to the plenary of the General Assembly, in order to enhance discussion of evaluation, planning, budgeting and monitoring reports. Thus far, he had not received any information on that agenda item.

9. The Committee would continue with the practice of convening panels and holding interactive dialogues under agenda item 27, entitled "Effects of atomic radiation", agenda item 28, entitled "International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space", agenda item 29, entitled "United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East", agenda item 31, entitled "Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects" and agenda item 32, entitled "Questions relating to information".

10. In accordance with the decisions taken in connection with the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, particularly resolutions 56/509 and 58/126, the Committee would take up agenda item 5, entitled "Election of the officers of the Main Committees" approximately three months before the next session of the Assembly.

11. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the programme of work and the timetable contained in document A/C.4/63/L.1.

12. *It was so decided.*

13. **The Chairman** said that, as at previous sessions, the Committee would set up a working group of the whole, in order to prepare draft resolutions for submission under agenda item 28, entitled "International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space". He took it that the Committee wished to establish the group.

14. *It was so decided.*

15. **The Chairman** noted that, in approving its programme of work and timetable, the Committee had decided to hold one general debate covering all agenda items relating to decolonization, namely items 33, 34, 35, 36 and 37. Doing so would enable Committee members to speak on any or all of those agenda items at any meeting devoted to the topic. He suggested that the deadline for submission of draft proposals on the aforementioned agenda items should be set for Tuesday, 7 October 2008, at 4 p.m.

16. *It was so decided.*

Requests for hearings (aides-memoires 01/08 and 01/08/Add.1)

17. **The Chairman** drew attention to aides-memoires 01/08 and 01/08/Add.1, which contained 71 requests for hearings on the questions of Gibraltar, Guam, New Caledonia, the United States Virgin Islands and Western Sahara, and suggested that they be circulated as Committee documents.

18. *It was so decided.*

19. **The Chairman** said that he had also received a communication from the Chief Minister of Gibraltar, who wished to make a statement under agenda item 37. That statement would be scheduled accordingly.

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.